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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 001291

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/10/2016
TAGS: MOPS MARR PREL PGOV AF PO
SUBJECT: ISAF ALLIES WEIGHING IN WITH PORTUGAL

Classified By: AMBASSADOR STEPHENSON, REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (C/NF) Summary. Resident Ambassadors from NATO nations with uncaveated and militarily significant contributions to ISAF gave the ambassador a readout June 2 of their views regarding Portugal's contributions to that mission. While none of them have lobbied the GOP regarding the withdrawal of Portugal's QRF as vigorously as we have, each appeared receptive to our suggestion to do so. End summary.

¶2. (C/NF) Government of Portugal (GOP) interlocutors have privately told us that our efforts to lobby for expanded Portuguese contributions to ISAF would be substantially aided by complementary pressure from other allied governments. For that reason, the ambassador hosted the ambassadors from the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Denmark, Poland, and Canada for a lunch to discuss Portugal's role in ISAF and particularly the decision not to renew the company-level Quick Reaction Force (QRF) scheduled to end its mission in August 2008.

¶3. (C/NF) UK Ambassador Ellis said that he had last pressed the GOP on this issue in October 2007. None of the other ambassadors present had apparently done so, although Polish Ambassador Skorzynska said she was interested in demarching the GOP on the subject regardless of instructions from Warsaw. Some of the ambassadors admitted that they have not followed the issue very closely; indeed, some of them were unaware that Portugal had committed a second Operational Mentoring Liaison Team (OMLT).

¶4. (C/NF) Each of the ambassadors present believed it worthwhile to encourage the GOP at least to maintain its current commitment level. In discussing pressure points to do so, several made comments in line with our own understanding that President Cavaco Silva is the primary block to expanded contributions. Ambassador Ellis suggested that within Cavaco Silva's staff, the Chief of the Military House, General Reis, had particular influence.

Comment

¶5. (C/NF) While the GOP happily points to Cavaco Silva as the primary block to expanded contributions, there are few champions for the mission within the Prime Minister's office and the MFA. Even at the MOD, while the uniformed service chiefs are openly supportive of further missions, the Chief of Defense himself, General Valenca Pinto, is hesitant, we suspect for political reasons. We will continue to explore all avenues to influence the decision-making apparatus, including discussions with General Reis. We hope our colleagues from allied nations will make their own efforts as strongly and as soon as possible.
Stephenson